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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Letter dated 10 January 1995 from the Ambassador, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on status of children.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and annex as an official document of the fifty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights, under agenda item 24.

(Signed) Vladimir Pavićević

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Annex

On the occasion of the International Day of the Child and Children's Week, which will be marked in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in October with a number of activities and manifestations by and for children, the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is compelled to address the United Nations on behalf of over 3 million children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and 200,000 refugee children who have found shelter in this country.

This is the third year since the adoption by the Security Council of resolutions 757 (1992), 787 (1992) and the second year since the adoption of resolution 820 (1993), the implementation of which has directly jeopardized the lives of the youngest population in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and threatened its further development. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has informed the competent bodies of the United Nations on a number of occasions of this situation.

The United Nations had the opportunity to acquaint itself with our first special report on the problems and difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the beginning of October 1993, when the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia presented the most dramatic indicators on the increased infant mortality rate, decreased birth rate, reappearance of already forgotten diseases, children having to attend classes in unheated classrooms, etc. The fact that, for the first time since World War II, the infant mortality rate is higher than the birth rate in most of the country indicates quite clearly that the biological survival of the nation has been threatened.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia recently submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the initial report of the Government on the implementation of the Convention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the period 1990-1993, in which it described the situation in respect of the implementation of the rights of the child in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, problems in the realization of protection in various fields and efforts the Government is exerting to overcome such a situation. Each part of the report outlines the difficulties that the society, and especially children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, have to face as a result of the implementation of the Security Council resolutions, which objectively resulted in the complete international isolation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It contains numerous indicators, elaborated in detail, of the regressive developments in almost all fields of relevance to children.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in view of the well-being of children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, wishes to draw the attention of the competent international bodies and individuals to the ever-deteriorating position. The legitimacy of this right has been recognized by members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child who recently received the Yugoslav experts who gave an overview of the aggravated status of children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia caused by the sanctions.

As a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and a country that had at the time of the adoption of the Convention one of the most developed systems of child care and social care of children, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has in the past three years exhausted all its internal reserves and is developing its child-care policy with extremely modest material means but with great enthusiasm on the part of those directly involved in its specific fields.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia sincerely hopes that the process initiated of partial lifting of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will continue and that our future communications will not be burdened with concern, but rather with optimism regarding the future of the children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.